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**THE ROLE OF ITALY
IN THE NEW EUROPEAN ORDER**

BY

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

THE ROLE OF ITALY IN THE NEW EUROPEAN ORDER

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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ABSTRACT

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The end of the Cold War and dissolution of the Soviet Union has introduced a situation of great risk and uncertainty in Europe, as is demonstrated by a review of the political and economic difficulties of Eastern Europe. Several European security structures are attempting to calm and stabilize the situation, but it is not clear that any of them will suffice. In this cloudy situation, Italy will continue to support all structures that will help modernize and stabilize Europe. Italy will both support NATO while upgrading the WEU and working within the EC and CSCE. Occasional Italian initiatives to supplement these structures may be called for, such as the "Pentagonale" approach and special relationships Italy has as a Mediterranean nation. An independent Italian policy, however, is out of the question.

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1989 Europe has been the theater of historic revolutions and extraordinary changes. These revolutionary events, which began in Eastern Germany with the fall of the Berlin Wall, have been more wide-ranging than anything we have seen in the last 45 years and they have radically changed the reality and perspective of European security. The West won the Cold War. The bipolar strategic order that kept the peace in Europe for almost half a century, is over and a new era of great uncertainty has begun. New independent countries have emerged from the dissolution of the former Soviet Union. The disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the progressive withdrawal of the Soviet armies from the territories of the former Warsaw Pact members have basically altered the European security equation.

The Cold War is over, but the numerous changes in so many areas and the rapidity of these changes have resulted in ambiguity and risks. Concerns have resulted from not only the collapse of the Soviet Union but movement of refugees, religious fanaticism, ethnic and territorial disputes and serious economic, political and social difficulties.

The intent of this study is to determine how these events have changed the threat and to provide an estimate of the existing European security structures and of the role of Italy in the new European order.

NEW EUROPEAN SECURITY CONCERNS

The dissolution of the Soviet Union

The former Soviet Union is still in a process of political and economic transition. Of its fifteen former republics, only eleven have joined the new Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). From this collapsing system, three main areas of concerns are emerging.

The first area derives from the great number of different races, nationalities, languages, cultures and religions coexisting in the mosaic of the former Soviet Union. In the words of Stephen Van Evera: "The intermingling of nationalities is such that some 64 million people (24 percent of the entire population, totaling 262 million and composed of 104 different nationalities) either live outside their home republic, or are among the 89 small nationalities with no republic of their own".¹ The new freedom shows intolerance and ethnic and territorial disputes.

The second concern is about the collapse of the economy. Only a strong economy and sufficient welfare floor could help dampen the conflicts that are due to emerge in the new republics. But the economic damage of Communist era seems very serious if not irreversible. In fact, the Communist Party, in order to control the former republics more strictly, prevented them from developing economic self-sufficiency. Therefore, the new independent republics should agree some to form of common market similar to the European Community. Political instability

and economic fragility, together with ethnic conflicts and territorial disputes, can cause mass emigrations towards Western Europe. .

Nuclear arms control is a third concern. A proliferation of military power accompanied the division of Soviet nuclear and conventional military power now much is under the political control and responsibility of the republics in which the military units were placed. The four republics owning strategic nuclear weapons in their territories --Russia, Ukraine, Bvelorussia and Kazakhstan-- agreed on a Joint Command of Strategic Forces, but the future is uncertain about the dismantlement of their nuclear weapons. While the nuclear dilemma represents a nightmare in this climate of political instability, the persisting potential in conventional arms is also cause for worry. Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldavia have decided to establish independent conventional armies on the basis of the ex-Soviet forces remaining in their territory. All the other eight republics should keep their units under a single command, while reserving the right to create national guard formations. With these premises, even after implementation of the Conventional Forces Treaty (also uncertain), Russia will retain a formidable conventional military capability for the foreseeable future, which underlines the continuing need for collective Western defense.

The former members of the Warsaw Pact

After the communist collapse, East Germany, former member of the Warsaw Pact, has joined West Germany to form a bigger Federal Republic of Germany. This new country, due to its combined population of 80 million, its economic power and its dominant geographical position in the center of Europe, has the potential to challenge the existing balances. To avoid this, Germany must be embedded in an economic and increasingly politically integrated Western Europe. The means and the ways already exist: the European Community should evolve from economic entity to a full political body.

The other former members of the Warsaw Pact are looking for a better relationship with the West in order to receive some form of economic aid, while distancing themselves from the former Soviet Union. These countries suffer the same contradictions as the republics of the former Soviet Union, such as potential border disputes (between Poland and Lithuania, Byelorussia and Ukraine; Poland and CSFR; Hungary and CSFR) and the presence of ethnic pockets that may either seek independence or be claimed by other countries (Rumanians in Moldavian Bessarabia; Hungarians in Romania, Czechoslovakia and Ukraine). Also, there are polemics between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia over Macedonia and discontent between Bulgaria and Turkey over the Turkish minority in Bulgaria.

Yugoslavia and Albania

In Southeastern Europe, there are two, ex communist

countries that were not members of the Warsaw Pact: Yugoslavia and Albania. They are in a different situation than the WP countries and deserve separate consideration.

In Yugoslavia, the collapse of Soviet Union set an example for the disintegration of the former Federation, already in crisis since the Tito's death in 1980. The traditional differences of culture, and religion among Yugoslavs people re-emerged after almost half a century. The declarations of independence of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia from the Yugoslav Federation, ruled by Serbian nationalists, brought the country to a situation of bloody civil war. There is also concern about possible massacre of Albanians in the Kosovo region of Serbia.

In Albania, the Communist economy made the Albanians very poor, on the edge of starvation. The new freedom allowed the escape of tens of thousands of persons looking for a better life in Italy. That was an example of what may become the major threat to the interior stability of West European countries: the illegal immigration of large numbers of poor people.

EUROPEAN SECURITY STRUCTURES

In order to cope with the new European concerns, a complex of organizations is needed, with the capability to:

- dampen ethnic and border disputes,
- provide the economic relationship necessary to ease the irreversible democratization of the former communist countries,
- provide nuclear and conventional deterrence and defence;

- furnish necessary support to the United States, both political and military, in case of direct interventions aimed at the protection of interests considered vital for the Western Hemisphere.

The needed security framework could be based on already available security institutions, but changed if necessary in order to improve their capacity to accomplish the needed tasks:

- Council of Europe (COE),
- European Community (EC),
- Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE),
- West European Union (WEU),
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is an institution created in 1949 and now formed by 27 countries. It covers practically all aspects of European society except defense (human rights, social and economic issues, culture and sport, heritage and environment, etc.). It is important because its membership certifies democratic status and qualifies applicants for inclusion and participation in other organizations of European integration.

European Community

The European Community was created in 1957 and now includes 12 countries, all but one of which (Ireland) are also members of NATO. The Community (whose the major institutions are the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament) has a

population of 325 million and a GNP similar to that of the United States. The EC primary goal is to increase the economic and political integration among its 12 members. A main step toward this goal will be the creation of a single currency and regional central bank, as agreed upon during the meeting at Maastricht (Netherlands, 9-10 December 1991). The Maastricht summit also agreed to establish "common foreign and security policies with a view to increasing their influence on the world stage. That policy will be defined by unanimity, although the governments can also decide by unanimity that political aspects of a specific policy can be implemented through a two-thirds majority."² The governments decided also, for the first time, to work "toward the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence."³ Since mid-1989, the EC has played a key coordinating role for Western assistance to Eastern Europe. Now, the Community should reach a decision about the requests of Austria and Sweden, applying for full EC membership and economic assistance for the emerging democracies in Central Europe (Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary), applying for special EC association pacts.

Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe

The first Conference took place in 1973 in Helsinki with 33 countries (31 European countries, the USA and Canada) attending. Its result was the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. Before November 1990, the main focus had been on three earlier conferences, Belgrade (1977), Madrid (1982-83) and Vienna (1986).

The Vienna conference is notable because it resulted in a mandate for the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and Confidence Security Building Measures (CSBMs) negotiations. The successful conclusion of those historic treaties improved the relations between the CSCE States.

Now, fifty-two countries (all European, except the United States and Canada) are members of this organization focusing on three major issues: political-military confidence building measures, human rights (individual and minority) and scientific, cultural and educational cooperation.

Further, the CSCE, after the signature of the Charter of Paris (November 1990) establishing a number of its new political structures (a Council of Foreign Ministers, a permanent Secretariat and other Committees), is expected to gain influence as a key forum for dialogue as its institutions mature.

West European Union

The WEU was created in 1948 but with the birth of NATO the organization entered a long period of inactivity until 1984, when the members decided to reactivate the Union.

Now, the Western European Union is an institution formed by 9 countries (all NATO and EC members), with a number of active organs including the WEU Council and the WEU Assembly. Its principal aims, according to the modified Brussels Treaty, are to:

- reaffirm the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations,

- promote the unity and to encourage the progressive integration of Europe,

- afford military assistance to each other in resisting any policy of aggression.

At the already mentioned Maastricht EC summit, WEU was designated as the defense arm of the EC and was authorized to elaborate and implement Community decisions on defense issues. Those should, anyway, be compatible with existing commitments to NATO.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NATO was created in 1949 in order to cope with the threat from the Communist world and to safeguard the freedom and the common heritage and civilization what came to be sixteen members.

Now, the Cold War is over, but NATO does not need the Communist threat to justify its existence. NATO can continue to play an important role for the peace in Europe together other security organizations.

In addition to furnishing a trans-Atlantic link, NATO can continue to provide the security frame in which the CSCE may speed up its "institutionalization" process, the EC may reach its political integration and the WEU may transform itself in a more and more efficient European military instrument.⁴

Even the former Eastern bloc foresees the need for a NATO which provides for the stability of a new Europe. In order to accomplish this task, NATO created the North Atlantic Cooperation

Council (NACC) for cooperation among the countries of a larger and more peaceful Europe. The inaugural meeting of NACC took place on 20 December 1991 in Brussels.

NATO, however, must reshape some of its functions in order to further peace and cooperation in a new Europe. Its priority should be to resolve the "out-of-area" problem in order to get more flexible and more global.

In conclusion, it seems that the means which can help reach the goal of a lasting security in Europe are already available. The main problem is which way the three main security institutions (CSCE, WEU, NATO) will link with each other and will cooperate. It will take time and it will need prudence and coolness so that the three main institutions become ready to be transformed and eventually merged to perform the task.

At the moment, we can see clearly how useful is NATO if we compare the main three security institutions in Europe. CSCE can only consult. WEU can consult and act, but its ability to act is very limited because of its scarce experience in resolving conflicts. Only NATO can consult and can act with a unique background of infrastructure and experience.

However, the main effort of the action of the Western countries, directed at dampening the risk originating from instability, should focus on economic aid. In fact, there is no doubt that the level of democratization reaches the point of "no return" only in a condition of economic sufficiency. Ethnic and religious differences may lose most of their danger if states

meet the primary needs of their people's welfare.

ITALIAN DEFENSE POLICY

In this new post Cold War setting, conflicting interests impede even temporary peace, stability and mutually beneficial relations. The seeking of national identity, religious differences, and strong ethnic trends will feed volatility, clashes, and foreign interventions.

In this peculiar environment Italy has shaped and closely sticks to a foreign policy, with sensitivity and sense of responsibility, aiming at preserving peace in the area, safeguarding of national integrity, and protecting its legitimate rights. The basic principles of Italian policy are outlined below:

- remain faithful to the principles of democracy, peace, security, international cooperation and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries;
- respect and observe the principles of international law, the principles of the UN Charter, Helsinki Final Act and international treaties and agreements endorsed by Italy;
- support the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes With neighboring countries based on international law and international practice;
- believe in the significance of NATO's defence value in conjunction with its trans-Atlantic dimension and at the same time believe in the great importance to the upgrading

of the European Cooperation on security and defence within the WEU. Italy also wishes to see military forces reduced to the minimum possible;

- seek the development of good relations with all countries, on terms of honest reciprocity.

Based on its national defence policy, Italy has formulated its national military with the following goals:

- modern and flexible armed forces, capable of achieving credible deterrence;
- convergence of national economy with that of the EC countries;
- active participation in NATO in conjunction with a European orientation aiming at European integration.

The collapse of the Communist systems have raised important questions for NATO with respect to its mission and future role.

It is clear that the redefinition of NATO's mission and role dictates that the Alliance organizes flexible rapid reaction forces and builds a new structure of command and control. Italy is an advocate of this new structures of the Alliance which will invigorate its politico-military strength.

Italy seek its national security in the frame of the collective security provided by the Atlantic Alliance. Also, Italy fosters the development of WEU as the European pillar of NATO and as the military organization of EC.

THE EC, ITALY, AND THE EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Europe is undergoing dramatic change. The countries of Eastern Europe, after shedding the totalitarian rule which stifled their socio-economic development for more than forty years, have embarked upon the process of economic and political reforms with the aim of establishing a pluralistic democratic system and a market economy. The liberation of Eastern Europe together with the momentous changes in the Soviet Union have radically transformed East-West relations and have eliminated the political but not the economical division of the continent into Western and Eastern Europe.

Faced with these changes, the post-war European institutions of cooperation are striving to adapt their functions and structures to new conditions and realities or they are in search of new tasks in order to survive. NATO is obviously feeling most acutely the changes, particularly after the reduction of the Soviet military threat and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. New institutions are created to reflect the new relations and to cater for the new needs, such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) or the CSCE, which seems to be destined to evolve into an institution.

Europe is therefore looking for a "new architecture" and a new identity transcending the legacies of the past. Europe as a region has never had clear boundaries, but it has had identifiable core areas, shifting slowly over time in response to

internal and external developments. Europe is indeed in such a process now.

The institution central to this process is certainly the European Community (EC). Although a product of the Cold War period and logic, the EC has demonstrated a remarkable capacity to adjust to new conditions and absorb change. Consequently, the EC appears to be the bedrock for the new European order. But the EC itself is undergoing profound change. Two negotiations are currently underway for deepening and accelerating integration, one aiming at establishing economic and monetary union (EMU), and a second one for advancing political union involving, among other things, the development of a common foreign policy embracing security and eventually defence. These negotiations constitute partly a response to changing European environment and partly the result of the dynamics of integration. Yet one of the main concerns of the Community at present is Eastern Europe.

No doubt, the Community appears to be the most attractive institution for the newly liberated countries of Eastern Europe, as they tend to view the EC as the chief institution capable of guaranteeing and fostering their process of economic, social, and political reform by providing the necessary financial assistance and political support. They also see the systems of the member states of the Community as representing the model for the political and social organization which they are striving to accomplish.

As a long-term perspective, they aspire to become integrated

as full Community members. Already Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary have stated their intention to join the Community as full members as soon as their political and economic conditions allow them to do so. The Community will therefore be confronted very soon with the prospect of further enlarging its membership to the east in addition the pressures for admitting new members from other quarters of Europe (Austria, Cyprus, Malta, Turkey, Sweden). The current Community's stance on this perplexing issue is that it cannot consider, let alone start the process of further enlargement, before the process for deepening integration is completed. Consequently, for the immediate future the countries of Eastern Europe will have to seek alternative arrangements for becoming linked to the European Community. Nevertheless, from a political point of view, the Community itself is keen to bring these countries into its wider system of relations, yet without immediately admitting them as full members.

To that end, the Community has, as from 1989, inaugurated a new policy towards Eastern Europe in response to the historic changes transforming the region. Indeed the Community has been entrusted with the task of coordinating the overall Western policy actions towards the East European countries in the context of the G-24 group (OECD countries). In December 1989 the Community, with the backing of the G-24 countries, adopted an action plan under the name of "Phare" for Poland and Hungary, to be later extended to all East European countries in their drive

for economic and political reforms (food aid, stabilization fund, special grants and loans). Moreover, following a French initiative, the Community and the G-24 countries set up the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) with the task of assisting the transition of the Eastern European countries towards a more market-oriented economy and speed up the necessary structural reforms. The Community has also set up the Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Students (TEMPUS) and the European Training Foundation (ETF) -- schemes open to other G-24 countries -- aimed at helping Eastern European countries:

- to modernize their higher education systems and improve vocational training;
- to establish links with higher education institutions in the EC countries.

Moreover, responding to political pressures of the Eastern European countries for a more advanced pattern of relations, the Community decided in 1990 to offer to all Eastern European countries association agreements with the following basic elements: trade with a view to free trade, various forms of economic and commercial cooperation, cultural cooperation, technical assistance in the form of financial protocols, political dialogue and appropriate institutional frameworks. The conclusion of these agreements would mark a very important political development since they would help bring Eastern Europe into the orbit of the Community. Nevertheless, it is clearly laid

down that association would not automatically lead to Community membership, though this is not excluded as a future option.

The European Community is therefore providing:

- the institutional framework for integrating East European countries into the international community;
- the financial means and economic support for the transformation of their economies into market economies;
- the political support for the consolidation of democratic politics and institutions in the East European countries;
- the prospect for eventual full membership.

It is clear therefore that the Community has come to play a "stabilizing role" for the whole region of Eastern Europe. In this respect it is important to note that German unification was so swiftly and politically successfully accomplished because the European Community afforded the institutional framework ensuring that the new, mighty Germany would be firmly tied to democratic politics and peaceful international behavior.

The main tenets of Italy's European policy can be summed up as follows:

- transformation of the European Community into a European Union with a federal structure and supra-national institutions;
- development of a genuine common foreign, security and defence policy by the Community (European Union) in order to defend its unity, independence, territorial integrity and interests and to act as a united, credible, and

coherent force in the international system;

- support for the EMU as an indispensable precondition for complete political union, accompanied by the formulation of the appropriate common policies and the necessary financial resources for bringing about economic convergence (cohesion).

The Community is currently in the process of negotiating a set of advanced association agreements to bring East European countries closer to its institutions. But for the moment these agreements involve only Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. What role should or could Italy, as a member of the Community, play in promoting the European Community relations with the East European countries?

In answering this question one should start by emphasizing that it is clearly in the interest of Italy to encourage the extension of the Community's presence, role and influence in the area of Eastern Europe and more so in the area of the Balkans. And this is in general terms Italy's actual policy in the Community. The Community can obviously exert a stabilizing influence in the fluid and highly unpredictable situation in the Balkans.

As a member state of the Community geographically situated near the Balkans, Italy has no other choice but to support the progressive integration of the Balkan region, together with the rest of Eastern Europe, into the European Community's system. It would serve the long term political

interests of Italy if all East European countries, including the Balkans, were eventually admitted to the Community as full members (on the condition of course that the process for deepening integration would not be disrupted).

Thus, building on its role as a member of the Community, Italy can formulate a policy aiming at encouraging the Community to develop a Balkan policy linked to the political and economic condition of the region. What seems to be lacking in the Community's approach towards Eastern Europe is a political strategy capable of addressing the political problems in the area and particularly of the Balkans. The association agreements represent an extremely important step but not an adequate one as it relies predominantly on economic factors.

In 1989-91 there was an early Italian attempt to build integrative structures for cooperation linking Italy, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. This group, named the "Pentagonale", was formed to cushion the impact of decreased links with the Russia and to ease the breakthrough into West Europe. This regional organization was also sponsored by Italy because of its aim to get trade agreements and the necessary inland for the port of Trieste, that, in the past, was the port serving the "Middle Europe" belonged to the Habsburg Empire. By 1991 Poland joined the "Pentagonale" transformed into "Hexagonale". With the collapse of the former Yugoslav Federation and the inclusion of Slovenia and Croatia, the organization has been renamed the Central European Initiative (CEI). But, the

collapse of Yugoslavia and recently the division of the former Czechoslovakia slowed the development of these Italian-led initiatives.

Italy should place its own Balkan policy firmly in the context of the Community and at the same time try to foster a special "Community role" in relation to the Balkan states. Of course, Italy should try to take advantage of the economic opportunities offered by the agreements between EC and Eastern Europe to establish its economic presence in the region.

In conclusion, as a member state of the Community, Italy could and should develop and project a special policy in the framework of the Community targeted at propelling the Community into shaping a more coherent and comprehensive policy for East Europe.

ITALY AND THE MEDITERRANEAN: A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

By virtue of its position Italy has suffered from both overland invasion and sea-borne threats. It is not surprising, therefore, that modern Italy with its extensive coastline considers the Mediterranean as a strategic zone of the utmost importance for the security and welfare of the nation.

This strategic zone, on the other hand, is also of critical value to the entire Western World. The Eastern Mediterranean is home of a festering Middle East dispute; nearly 70 per cent of the world's known oil reserves are near by, including the oil

fields of the southwestern territories of the former Soviet Union. The entire Mediterranean is crisscrossed by some of the busiest sea lanes in the world, connecting the Atlantic with the Indian Ocean via Suez as well as Europe with North Africa, the Middle East, and the oceans beyond.

During the Cold War years, Italy, as a member of the Atlantic Alliance, shared in the collective vigilance over the Soviet naval presence in Mediterranean and took an active part in promoting stable regional relations. More recently, however, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the demise of the Warsaw Pact, and the historic reshaping of the European security system have produced new challenges and opportunities. Instability and the war in the Balkans, for example, are sources of serious Italian concern. Political uncertainty, economic underdevelopment, and the population explosion in northern Africa and many parts of the Middle East generate somber thoughts.

The prospect of a flood of illegal immigrants seeking better living conditions and the continuing Middle East conflict, despite recent hopes of some minor progress, remain potential flash points. The tragic disintegration of Yugoslavia, and the civil war that ensued, starkly highlighted the vulnerability of the Balkans.

Against this background, and with the end of the Cold War and the departure of the Soviet threat from the Mediterranean basin, Italy now faces a redefinition of its perception of the Mediterranean strategic environment. In broad terms, and

especially in the context of its NATO and EC membership, this redefinition may be based on a number of salient points:

- promotion of stable relations with the countries of the North African coast and the Middle East beyond the past East-West rivalry;
- development of a regional security and cooperation regime that will ensure peaceful resolution of outstanding and future disputes;
- concerted policies to minimize the potential for a mass illegal immigration of economic refugees in a South-North direction;
- a comprehensive arms control regime; particularly in terms of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction;
- and concerted efforts to ensure the environmental stability of the Mediterranean Sea.

Italy has traditionally sought friendly relations with all North African and Middle East countries. Its ties with the Arab world have historic roots and have remained strong throughout the postwar years.

Meantime, the Gulf War demonstrated that, aside from the Arab-Israeli dispute, the Middle East nations can be hostile to each other, unexpectedly. And, just like during the Gulf War, Italy can be involved, under the aegis of the United Nations, in a military collective action to preserve peace and security in the region.

The concept of a Mediterranean Conference on Security and

Cooperation is not new; it has been advanced by fellow EC members, like Italy and Spain, and it warrants serious consideration. There is a strong case to be made for regional cooperation as we move away from the constants of the East-West rivalry. The greatest enemy of post-Cold War stability, at least in the short run, is uncertainty and the intense anxiety that it breeds. Smaller countries find themselves in a security vacuum. A Mediterranean Conference on Security and Cooperation may tackle the sources of this anxiety in many ways, starting perhaps from economic and technological cooperation and then building upon the foundations of mutual trust which will evolve out of these initial projects. Italy, as NATO and EC member in the Mediterranean, may indeed play a key role in promoting such goodwill and practical cooperation.

The problem of illegal immigration requires special mention here as it is an issue of strategic importance to Italy in recent years. Italy has attracted many illegal immigrants by virtue of its geographic location and its democratic regime. Many of them came in the hope of eventually gaining entry into other EC countries, United States, or Canada. Others are simply looking for jobs locally, and some are genuine political refugees seeking asylum.

Irrespective of the immigrants' reasons and intentions, the net result is an inflow of foreign nationals unlike anything Italy has ever experienced in recent memory. Ethnic strife in the Balkans has accentuated the problem and helped in building up

potential population pressures upon the northern Italian frontier. At the same time, the rapid population growth in North African countries and their poor economic conditions combine to raise concerns about mass population movements towards EC member states as early as the closing years of this decade.

The economic burden of such uncontrolled population flows upon host countries will be enormous, not to mention the political and social strains that will ensue. Italy is simply unable to receive any significant number of destitute economic immigrants. It is, therefore, supporting all EC effort for a comprehensive immigration policy, including economic assistance to North African states with the aim of providing better economic conditions and a stable standard of living for their growing populations .

Another key strategic factor for the future of the Mediterranean security is the control of mass-destruction weapons technologies -- particularly chemical and biological munitions and ballistic missiles. While the apocalyptic scenario of a global nuclear war has all but permanently receded, there are few effective methods of preventing "small" wars being fought with arsenals the superpowers never dared use. The potential for such "small" wars, therefore, is an excellent incentive to seek effective control over the proliferation of these technologies within the foreseeable future.

Throughout the ages, the Mediterranean did not only serve as a great sea route, but also as a literal source of life for

its littoral countries. In recent times though, Mediterranean waters have been subjected to immense abuse. Toxic industrial and agricultural pollutants, raw sewage, pollution from shipping, over-fishing, illegal dumping of dangerous wastes, to name just a few, are threatening the very survival of the Mediterranean. Its death will have incalculable environmental and economic consequences for all states along its coasts. Therefore, there can be no talk of "security" and "strategic reassessment" without a thorough understanding of the ecological factor and immediate measures to deal with a disaster that is already unfurling. Italy maintains an acute interest in the prevention of the environmental catastrophe threatening the Mediterranean, and it supports all international initiatives to achieve that purpose.

CONCLUSION

As we view the future of post-Cold War Europe, we see that it begins with a great paradox. The Western half of Europe appears to be firmly and effectively organized. NATO will continue to provide security and stability at a trans-Atlantic level. The European Community will certainly expand its functional concerns to include security and defence matters.

The paradox is that the Eastern half of Europe is currently experiencing a rapid process of political and economic change seeking security, progress, and welfare. At present, the main hope for conflict prevention and conflict management at an all-

European level (including the United States and Canadian membership) is the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The CSCE can help stabilize the east and southeast European regions during this most critical time of transition towards a so-called "New International Order". The CSCE can be further augmented with a series of sub-regional cooperation and security arrangements. All the above institutions will remain, in turn, under the global peace-keeping and peace-making umbrellas of the United Nations Security Council. The latter has exhibited in the post-Cold War era a remarkable capacity for consensus given the political convergence among its permanent members.

In this situation, Italy, as a loyal NATO and EC member, can play a constructive role, within the CSCE and in the Mediterranean, to foster and safeguard the peace in the new order, according to the UN resolutions.

ENDNOTES

¹Stephen Van Evera: "Primed for Peace. Europe after the Cold War", International Security (Winter 1990/91), 48.

²Quoted by Alan Riding, "Measured Steps Toward One Europe: What Was Decided", The New York Times, 12 December 1991, A 18.

³Ibid.

⁴Survey of Current Affairs (July 1990).

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